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## An Analytical Survey of Arthur Jeffery's Studies on the Textual Criticism of the Qur'ān

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### Abstract

Arthur Jeffery (1892-1959), an Australia-based American Orientalist is considered an authority among the Western scholars on the Qur'ān particularly the Textual Criticism of the Qur'ān. Dr. Jeffery worked as a professor of Semitic Languages at the School of Oriental Studies of the American University at Cairo (1921-1937) and then taught jointly at Columbia University New York City and Union Theological Seminary (1938-1959). His chief interest in research was philology and linguistics. He chose the holy book of Islam for philological and linguistic analysis. During his professional career, he left several remarkable works on the subject ranging from complete books, research articles, book chapters and lectures. The most important works include, 'The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān', 'Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān: Old Codices', 'The Qur'an as Scripture' and 'The Koran: Selected Suras'. The present research is qualitative in its nature. The common theme of all his works under discussion is textual criticism in terms of recital variations of the Qur'ānic text, its borrowed vocabulary, the process of textual preservation and arrangement of the text. They shall be evaluated under the methodology of analytical research and the lacuna for which Jeffery's theories are unacceptable for the Muslims will be pointed out.

**Key Words:** Orientalist, the Holy Qur'ān, Textual Criticism, Analytical, Works

## Introduction

The Qur'ān is the central religious text of Islam and is the main source of Muslim law, creed and ethics. It is regarded as the great miracle of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and widely considered the finest work in classical Arabic. The Muslims believe it to be the culmination of the revealed truth starting with Adam (PBUH) and ending with the last Prophet (PBUH). According to Muslim faith, the Qur'ān is the word of God revealed by Him on the heart of the Prophet (PBUH) through the Archangel Gabriel (*Jibrīl*). It has been handed down to the next generations in its original and complete form.

The Orientalist tradition of Qur'ān studies can be traced as early as 12<sup>th</sup> Century AD when the Qur'ān was translated into Latin in 1143 AD by Robert of Ketten ([Robertus Kettenesis 1110-1160 AD](#)) and published in 1543 AD with the title, "Lex Mahumet Pseudoprophete" (Law of Muhammad the False Prophet). The movement kept evolving in various phases like Early Orientalism, Colonial Orientalism and Post-Colonial. Now Orientalism has entered into Neo-Orientalism. Textual criticism of the Qur'ān first time was initiated in 19<sup>th</sup> Century by a German Orientalist [Theodore Noldeke \(1836-1930 AD\)](#) when he wrote his book "Geschichte des Qorans" (The History of the Qur'ān) in 1860 and followed by many others. Dr. Jeffery is one of them. He left some remarkable works representing Orientalist tradition of textual criticism of the Qur'ān. His works include books, research papers, edited and translated books. His works throw ample light on the fact that his chief interest was the Holy Book of Islām especially its textual history and philological domains.

It is the duty of the Muslims to defend their holy book against the allegations raised by the Orientalists and they have been doing the same for centuries. As far as Jeffery's works are concerned, some very significant attempts

have been done by worthy scholars such as Dr. Hafsa Nasreen's Ph.D research titled "A Critical Study of the Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān" in 2010 at University of the Punjab, Pakistan and an important article by Dr. M. Akram Choudhry, Ex.Vice Chancellor of the University of Sargodha, with the title, "Orientalism on Variant Readings of the Qur'ān: The Case of Arthur Jeffery," published in American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences, USA. But, there is no study that has given a comprehensive overview and critical analysis of Jeffery's all studies on the Qur'ān. The following lines are going to introduce and analyze his major works particularly related to the scripture of Islām with critical reviews in context of textual criticism. This research is qualitative in its nature and analytical method of research has been adopted to study the data under discussion.

### Jeffery's Works on the Qur'ān (Books)

- The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān
- Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān: Old Codices
- The Qur'an as Scripture
- The Koran: Selected Suras

### Edited Works

- Kitāb al-Masāhif of Ibn Abi Dāwud
- Muqaddimatān fi 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān

### Articles

- The Mystic Letters of the Koran
- Progress in the Study of the Korān Text
- Abu 'Ubaid on the Verses Missing from the Koran
- A Variant Text of the Fātiha

### 1. Books

#### The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān

The book was originally published in 1937 on behalf of the Government of his highness the Maharaja Gackwad of Baroda by Benoytosh Bhattachariyya, Director of the Oriental Institute Baroda. It was reprinted in 2007 with a preface by Gerhard Bowering and Jane Dammen McAuliffe under the series

'Texts and Studies on the Qur'ān by Brill Leiden, Boston.

### Critical Review

The Foreign vocabulary of the Qur'ān is one of Jeffery's most remarkable works in the field of textual criticism of the Qur'ān. He has compiled the non-Arabic Vocabulary of the Qur'ān that has its origins in other languages like Persian, Greek, Aramaic, Syriac, Nabataean, Ethiopic and Coptic. Jeffery thinks that for any student or researcher who wants to study the text of the Qur'ān critically, he cannot do so unless the vocabulary of the Qur'ān is studied. The material of the book was compiled in 1926 that was roughly four times the size of the present volume (Jeffery, 2007, p. xiv). Its size caused hurdle in publication. The size of the book was reduced and only very essential material was left because the important thing was to place in the hands of students a list of these foreign words with the indication of their probable origin (Jeffery, 2007, p. xiv). It will serve as "a foundation from which other and better equipped scholars may proceed in the important task of the Qur'ānic vocabulary" (Jeffery, 2007, p. xv). According to Jeffery only Noldeke might be a person who could do justice to the subject because he was equipped with marvelous capabilities of philological nuances in Semitic languages (Jeffery, 2007, p. xiv). He finally, classes the probable foreign vocabulary of the Qur'ān into three classes:

- i. Words that are entirely non-Arabic such as, نمارق، فردوس، زنجبیل، استبرق.
- ii. Words that are Semitic and whose trilateral root may be found in Arabic. But which are used in the Qur'ān have not been in Arabic sense of the root but in that of other language. Such as, صوامع، درس، بارک etc.
- iii. Words that are genuinely Arabic and commonly used in the Arabic language but as used in the Qur'ān, it has been coloured

with the meaning of cognate languages, such as the word نور (Nur) means light in Arabic but has been taken in the meaning of religion, it is the influence of Syriac (Jeffery, 2007, pp. 39-40).

The main part of the book has been titled, 'The Foreign Words' starting with the word "اب" (Abb) and ending with یونس (Yunus). Dr. Hafsa Nasreen (Nasreen, H., 2010) has termed only 275 words as foreign words of the Qur'ān belonging to the languages such as, Greek, Persian, Syriac, Ethiopic, Coptic, North African language of a Christian denomination, and Nabataean, a form of Aramaic strongly influenced by Arabic. The words have been arranged alphabetically. Jeffery's methodology of bringing these so-called non-Arabic words under discussion can be highlighted with the following points:

- a) The words have been enlisted in alphabetical order of Arabic.
- b) The sura number and the verse number in which the particular word has been used is given. The sura numbering has been romanized.
- c) Meaning of the word has been given in English.
- d) Linguistic analysis by the Muslim authorities (usually Tabari, Zamakhshari, Baidawi and Suyuti) has been presented and an evidence is brought that the word is foreign. Philological and lexical works are also quoted.
- e) Then Jeffery turns to the foreign languages and tries to determine the root of the word in particular language. This etymological examination is supported by western scholars such as, Noldeke, Mingana, Herschfeld and Fraenkel etc.
- f) He usually puts his final opinion in a very careful manner. The expressions such as 'May be', possibly, probable, perhaps etc. are used but at times he shows full confidence and throws his weight in other scale.

Jeffery's compendium of philological scholarship is considered a remarkable step in the field of foreign vocabulary of the Qur'ān among the Orientalists. This shows his amazing capability regarding linguistic and philological aspects of languages particularly Semitic languages. Though he is not very harsh in his comments on the Holy Book of Islām, yet he leaves no stone unturned in creating doubts regarding the textual status of the Qur'ān with the Muslims. The very apparent message propagated through the book is nothing other than that the Qur'ān has human origin not divine. Dr. Hafsa Nasreen concludes her research that 80% of the 275 words are pure Arabic and the remaining 20% includes proper nouns and the terms that had been arabicized before they were used in the Qur'ān.

#### **Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān: Old Codices**

The book was published by E.J. Brill Leiden, Netherlands in 1937 (Jeffery, 1937). It was reprinted in 1975 by AMS Press, N.York (Jeffery, 1975), and then in 2015 by Gyan Books India (Jeffery, 2015).

#### **Critical Review of the Book**

'Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān' opens with a preface of 10 pages followed by an 18 pages introduction, 15 primary codices and 13 secondary codices, spreading on the major part of the book. In preface, Jeffery clears the context of writing the book and describes his affiliation with the project of Qur'ānic Archive set up by Bergstrasser, a German Orientalist, and his collaboration with him and his successor Dr. Pretzl. Meanwhile, Jeffery came across with the existence of the Manuscript of 'kitāb al-Masāhif' "The sole surviving example of the little group of Masāhif books" (Jeffery, 1937, p. vii). He shares the chief objective of compiling the material on the variants of the Qur'ān that is "to expose the text at once to the criticism of scholarship" (Jeffery, 1937, p.

vii) under the following methodology. The variants have been taken from the non-Uthmanin codices especially from those of Ibn Mas'ud and Ubai Ibn Ka'b. Jeffery says that modern scholarship is not ready to accept the justification from the Muslims that there is no authenticity of these variants. So, it needed that "an investigation must be done to find what went before the canonical text" (Jeffery, 1937, p. vii).

Jeffery says that the investigation of the text of the Qur'ān is such a field of study that is still in its infancy. The Muslims ignored non-canonical variants so much of them was lost gradually. The example of Al-Itqan of al-Suyuti may be quoted as it deals matters of Muslim Massora, history of exegesis and much more "but very little that bears on the investigation of the text" (Jeffery, 1937, p. 3). It was west that initiated it in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Noldeke embarked upon the subject when he wrote the very first edition of his book "Geschichte Des Qorans" in 1960.

Jeffery presents the Muslim Orthodox theory of textual history of the Qur'ān and then the stand of the Orientalists on it. He gives his analysis also on Muslims' take, and puts emphasis on the old codices throwing light on the pre-'Uthmānic phase of Qur'ānic text. The variants contained in these codices are of great importance for Jeffery but he admits that they are not enough to create the intended text though they provide a glimpse into that phase. Concluding his discussion of variant Readings, Jeffery says that all the variants collected from the works of Tafsir and philology suggest that they can be used for interpretation and they are near to the theory of the Orthodox. The list of codices derived from the book of Ibn Abi Dawud and other sources presents two type of codices (a) primary codices and (b) secondary codices. Jeffery comments on the authenticity of the variants containing in these codices that certain type of suspicions are sure. Their

transmission is also defective. He finally concludes on the following two points:

- i. We have a very small portion of variants derived from the old codices.
- ii. The variants available in hand are not very unorthodox.

The main part of the book contains codices. They have been categorized into two categories, Primary codices and Secondary codices. Primary codices are fifteen attributed to the companions of the Prophet (PBUH) and thirteen codices have been attributed to the successors of the companions (Tabi'in).

Jeffery has collected these materials from various sources of commentaries, Qira'at works and philological literature. The methodology adopted is that each codex has been introduced first along with the introduction of the authority to which it is attributed. Then all the variants available with Jeffery are given as per sura order of the current text of the Qur'an. The verse number has been given first to which the variant belongs, then the text of the Uthmānic Recension and then the variant has been placed against this text. The agreement or disagreement of the authority to the standard text has also been mentioned by the author. If some readings other than this variant are attributed to the authority, they have also been pointed out. For elaboration, an example of the Sura Fatiha is being quoted from the codex of Ibn Mus'ud (RA).

**Sura-I 4/3:** مَالِكِ - He agreed with TR against the alternative reading مَلِكِ which, however, some gave from him also, 6/5: أَرشِدْنَا - إهْدِنَا 7/6: مَنْ - الَّذِينَ So read also by Zaid b. 'Ali and Ibn az-Zubair. 7: غَيْرَ - غَيْرِ So read by 'Ali and Ibn az-Zubair.

The verse numbering with oblique shows the difference of verse number between Flugel Text and Cairo Edition of the Qur'an. The example quoted also shows that Jeffery gives the detail of the variant as read by other authorities. Such is the case of all codices and

their available variants. Thus, he has actually enlisted the variants he found in different sources of exegetics, Qira'at works and the works dealing philological nuances along with Ibn Abi Dāwud's Kitāb al-Masāhif, the main source of these codices and variant readings.

### The Qur'an as Scripture

The Qur'an as Scripture was first published in parts in different Numbers of the journal 'The Muslim World'. The details are as follow:

**Part-I** The Muslim World, volume 40 (1950), pp. 41-55 (Jeffery, 1950)

**Part-II** The Muslim World, volume 41 (1950), pp. 106-134 (Jeffery, 1950)

**Part-III** The Muslim World, Volume 42 (1950), pp. 185-206 (Jeffery, 1950)

**Part-IV** The Muslim World, volume 42, (1950), pp. 257-275 (Jeffery, 1950)

Later these parts were printed as book in 1952 along with a lecture titled, "The Textual History of the Qur'an" originally delivered by Jeffery on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1946 at a meeting of the Middle East Society of Jerusalem, under the Chairmanship of Aref Bey (O.B.E) Assistant District Commission. It was published by the publisher, Russel F. Moore Company Inc., New York, USA. The book was reprinted in 1980 by Books for Libraries, a Division of Arno Press Inc. with the permission of Elsie Gordon Jeffery. The Arabic translation of the book, the Qur'an as Scripture has also been published in 1996 under the title of "القرآن ككتاب مقدس" by Nabil Fayyāz. (Formats and Editions of The Qur'an as Scripture, n.d., <https://www.worldcat.org>)

### Critical Review

The book, 'The Qur'an as Scripture' comprises of five parts. The first four parts deal with the scriptural status of the Qur'an and the last one throws light on the history of the Qur'anic text. It aims at analyzing the nature of the Holy Book of Islām as a Scripture. The Qur'an is the literal word of God. To the Muslims, the Prophet "Muhammad (PBUH) is only the mouthpiece

of revelation" (Jeffery, *The Qur'ān as Scripture*, 1980, p. 4). It is because of the Muslim doctrine of scripture, that the Qur'ān is "the Word of God that must be perfect in style, and diction and all that deviates from it must be shown to be imperfect" (Jeffery, *The Qur'ān as Scripture*, p. 5). To him, Old Testament, New Testament of the Christians, Avesta of the Zoroastrians, the Vedās and the Purāns of the Hindus, the Taoist canon of the Taoists and Homeric Poems (the Bible of the Greeks) all were written by various authorships unintentionally to be canonized and presented as scriptures of the community. It was the gradual process of evolution of that particular scripture. But the Qur'ān as scripture has different nature from them. "It is from beginning to end the product of one man and from one period" (Jeffery, *The Qur'ān as Scripture*, p. 4). In this regard, the Qur'ān resembles the scripture presented by Mani (216-272 AD), an Iranian religious leader and the founder of Manichaeism and some modern pseudo Scriptures like the Book of Mormon, Oahspe and the writings of Bahā'ullah. "Each of which was the work of one man, and consciously produced for the purpose of being used by a community as a Holy Book" (Jeffery, *The Qur'ān as Scripture*, p. 4).

He says that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) took the theories of scripture and Prophetic office from his environment of which the people of the Book were an integral part. But he developed both the theories in his own way and molded them very intelligently. The declaration of Finality of Prophethood and the Finality of the revelation earned a superior status for him and for the Qur'ān. Jeffery has raised a number of questions creating doubts regarding the true status of the Prophet (PBUH) and the Qur'ān. He has compared him and his message with some characters of religious history like Mani, Joseph Smith and Martin Luther etc. He seems

to be convinced that the Prophet (PBUH) was sincere on his own like them and wanted to introduce religious reforms in his society.

The last part of the book titled as 'The Textual History of the Qur'ān' narrates the history of the text of the Qur'ān from the Prophetic era to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He raises questions on the history narrated by Muslim Orthodoxy and reproduces it in his own way. He starts from the point that there was no collected, arranged and edited text of the Qur'ān when the Prophet of Islām left this world and ends with mentioning the Qur'ānic Archive set up by Bergstrassar at Munich University for preparing the critical edition of the Qur'ān of which Jeffery also had been collaboration partner. The aim was to print "consonantal text... with a complete collection of all known variant readings given at the foot of the page", (Jeffery, *The Qur'ān as Scripture*, p. 103) The Qur'ānic citations in the book are based on Standard Text of 1344 A.H (1925 A.D) but where there is difference of verse numbering between this and that of Flugel, this difference has been pointed out as, "III, 16/14 means Sura III verse 16 but verse 14 in Flügel's text" (Jeffery, *The Qur'ān as Scripture*, p.1). Dr. Jeffery has used the approaches of comparative linguistics and comparative religion to determine the Qur'ān as scripture.

#### **The Koran: Selected Suras**

One of the most important studies of Dr. Jeffery on the Qur'ān is his work, 'The Qur'ān: Selected Suras' (Jeffery, *The Koran: Selected Suras*, 2001). It was first time published in 1958, by Limited Editions Club, New York.

#### **Critical Review**

Arthur Jeffery's 'The Koran: Selected Suras' is his translation work. Following the western tradition of critical study of the Qur'ān, he has selected only 64 Suras of the Quran, categorized them into 4 categories, translated them with brief introductions and there are

explanatory notes too for a common reader at the end of the book.

The suras or the parts of some long suras chosen by Jeffery have been selected under a specific objective that the text of the Qur'ān may be studied chronologically because the present order of the Qur'ānic Suras is not in the same order according to which the Qur'ān was revealed. So, it has been a topic of interest to dig out the chronological order so that the developmental process of the mind of the Prophet (PBUH) and the circumstances which surrounded him may be traced. By doing so, Jeffery has followed Noldeke, a German Orientalist, in categorizing the suras of the Qur'ān i.e. Early Meccan Suras, Middle Meccan Suras, Late Meccan Suras and Medinan Suras.

Jeffery has given a long essay as introduction preliminary to the translation of the suras. The introductory essay deals with the biographical sketch of the Prophet of Islām (PBUH) briefly and then comes to his preaching message known as the Qur'ān. According to him, in beginning it was not much different from the Rhythmical Prose of the old Arabian Soothsayers. Then gradually, the poetic fire died down and the revelatory message kept on becoming prosaic legislative material. He narrates the compilation story known with the Muslim orthodoxy and shows his concern that Modern scholarship is reluctant to accept it. According to him the most important concern of the modern scholarship is that the Muslim orthodoxy has attached the theory of I'jāz al-Qur'ān with the Qur'ān and that the Qur'ān is the literal word of God. One of the consequences of the theory is the notion that it is untranslatable. Jeffery states the tradition of Qur'ān translation particularly in the west and Expresses his liking for Bell's translation.

Finally, he briefs on the present translation and introduces some important features of his

work. They can be enlisted in the following points:

- The developmental process of the Qur'ānic text
- Adequate understanding of the message of the Qur'ān
- The influence of Dr. Bell's interpretations and renderings on his work
- English style has been compromised in order to show the awkwardness of Arabic expression in the Qur'ān.
- Explanatory additions added to the text have been marked in square bracket [ ].
- Biblical names have been given in familiar form and Arabic names have been transliterated.
- The verse form of the original text has been dropped only capital letter of the first word of the verse has been retained.
- Diacritical marks used for transliteration have not been used in order to keep it simple.

The introductions at the head of the Suras contain Jeffery's critical opinions regarding the arrangement of the text, determining the period of revelation, thematic coherence and so called errors. But mostly, it is expressed in possibilities and probabilities. The notes also explain some terms, conceptual ambiguities and comparison with contemporary religious sources.

### **Analysis**

Jeffery's remarkable work on the translation of the selected text is of scholarly nature. Like his other works on the Qur'ān, it has special worth to the western tradition of Qur'ān studies. He appears in his work as scholar and being a non-believer he definitely raises some questions which can't be acceptable for a Muslim. But at the same time he presents a lot of positives for example while narrating the biography of the Prophet (PBUH) he admits the respect of his family in these words: "Muhammad was a child of humble and poor though honourable citizens

of Mecca" (Jeffery, *the Koran: Selected Suras*, p. 9).

He further comments on the personality of Muhammad (PBUH) and the environment of Makkah: "From this environment of merchant activity and pagan idolatry the future Prophet grew up" (Jeffery, *the Koran: Selected Suras*, p.10). He admits the fact that the current Qur'ān of today contains the text which all belongs to the Prophet of Islām and he shows certainty from him: "That all it contains genuinely from the Prophet is fairly certain" (Jeffery, *the Koran: Selected Suras*, p.15). Moreover, when he talks about English translations of the Qur'ān he mentions Ross's work as the first one in this regard, he comments on its inaccuracy as, "Ross's work.... had little to recommend it" (Jeffery, *the Koran: Selected Suras*, pp.17-18).

On the other hand, many a things presented by him in this work are not acceptable for the Muslims and are objectionable such as, he presents Ka'aba, the sacred place for the Muslims, as an ancient shrine of a female goddess: "The shrine of an old Mother Goddess of Arabia" (Jeffery, *the Koran: Selected Suras*, p. 9).

He comments on the initial passages of the Qur'ān negatively and says that the Prophet (PBUH) uttered difficult diction because he was fond of them, "Obscure sentences with the fondness of strange words" (Jeffery, *the Koran: Selected Suras*, p.13). Similarly, he counts the actual text of the Qur'ān in 111 suras, and Fatiha, and Mu'awwidhatan as opener and closers not the part of actual text of the Qur'ān. Overall his work is scholarly and has a great value to orientalist tradition but there are some demerits too some of which have been indicated.

## 2. Jeffery's Edited Works on the Qur'an

There are two edited works on the Qur'an. Their details are as follow:

**Kitāb al-Masāhif of Ibn Abi Dāwud (Jeffery, A., ed., 1936)**

The Arabic part of the book, *Materials for the History of the text of the Qur'ān* contains *Kitāb al-Masāhif* by 'Abdullah bin Abi Dāwud edited by Jeffery and published in 1936 by al-Matbat al-Rahmāniyya, Egypt. During his search for the works providing material on the textual history of the Qur'ān, he met the Manuscript of this book lying in the Zahiriyya Library Damascus. When he was working in collaboration with German scholar Bergstrasser in order to produce a critical edition of the Qur'ān, he decided to edit it as it might be a foundational step to solve the problem of the textual history of the Qur'ān. Jeffery explains that there were two copies of this manuscript available one was in State Library of Egypt and the other was in his own possession. He edited it with great hardwork and published it in 1936.

This edited work of Jeffery contains a detailed preface (Muqaddima). The preface opens with the lines on the importance of the book opening new doors of Qur'ān studies. Here he points out that there are two types of scholars studying religious books. Some adopt historical critical methods to analyze text. On the other hand, some rely on the opinions recorded in various sources. Jeffery has named them "اهل التنقيب" and "اهل النقل". Western scholarship has adopted first approach but the Muslims still study the Qur'ān with that has been said before. That's why the door of textual history with the Muslims has been closed for a long time.

It was Noldeke, German Orientalist, who embarked on the subject and authored a book on the History of the Qur'ān in 1860. He was followed by Goldziher, Bergstrasser, Schwally and Otto. Pretzl.

Jeffery throws light on Masāhif books to which *Kitāb al-Masāhif* of Ibn Abi Dawud belongs. The book *Kitāb al-Masāhif* has five parts each has a few chapters in it. It provides material extremely unorthodox that mostly contradicts the things that have been

standardized with Muslim Orthodoxy. Yet, overall conclusions are close to the ones the Muslim orthodoxy has. The chief importance of the book is that it brings some old codices with their names that may be used by the Orientalists to draw a picture of the Pre-'Uthmānic text different from the standard text of the Qur'ān. But the dream of Jeffery and his colleagues is yet to be materialized in the form of Critical Edition of the Qur'ān to be produced by the Orientalists.

### **Muqaddimatān fi 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān**

'Muqaddimatān fi 'Ulum al-Qur'ān' (Jeffery, 1954) is Jeffery's edited work in Arabic. The work contains two Muqaddimas (Prefaces) of two well-known commentaries of the Qur'ān. Kitāb al-Mabāni fi Nazm al-Ma'āni and al-Jāmi' al-Sahih al-Muharrir a-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Qur'ān al-Aziz of Ibn Attia al-Gharnati al-Andalusi. The MS of both the books were lying in Berlin Library of Germany and Jeffery says that his senior colleague Gothelf Bergstrasser expressed the desire that these two should be edited two years before his accidental death. Noldeke and his student Schwally have cited these two in their 'History of the Qur'ān'. Jeffery was able to take up this work many years later when Dr. Cramer made possible to get photographs of the MSs.

According to Jeffery the author of the Kitab al-Mabāni is not known as the first page of the MS has fallen out and there is no other MS available and no mention in next pages of the MS. The information given in the next pages tells that the book was authored in 425 AH and the title of the book was also mentioned. The muqaddima contains ten chapters in which various discussions of 'Ulum al-Qur'ān have been discussed in detail. To Jeffery, apparently from the language and the narrational chains, it seems that he is a Spanish scholar likely to be Abu 'Uthmān al-Dāni al-Qurtabi. Two other works have also been mentioned in muqaddima, al-Ibāna wa al-I'rāb and al-Durar fi Tarfi al-Suwar but have

been lost and not found now. The editing of the work was done through only this single MS existing in Berlin Library.

The second Muqaddima is of al-Muharrir al-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Quiran al-Aziz of Ibn 'Atia Andalusī (543 AH). The editing of this work was carried out through three manuscripts one of Berlin, 2<sup>nd</sup> of Taimuriyya Library and the third one of Dār al-Kutub al-Misriyya.

### **3. Jeffery's Articles on the Qur'ān**

#### **The Mystic Letters of the Koran**

In the article titled "The Mystic Letters of the Koran" (Jeffery, 1942), Jeffery has opted to throw light on the Disjointed Letters (الحروف المقطعات) of the Qur'ān which appear at the heads of 29 sunas. Jeffery provides justification of writing on them in the very first line of the article by saying, "Each new student who comes to the study of the Arabic text of the Koran is more or less perplexed by the problem of the mystic letters" (Jeffery, 1942, p.247).

Jeffery has tried to bring into light the tradition of interpreting these letters from both the Muslim and the Western scholars. But he mainly focuses the contributions from the orientalist from Noldeke to Aduard Goossens. According to him, the Muslim savants have been in two categories with regards of Mystic letters, those who give mystic interpretation to them and those who find a rationale in interpreting them. Then six western scholars representing western tradition of interpreting mystic letters have been presented and their contributions have been commented. Noldeke has interpreted them as 'Monograms' which indicate the initial of the name of that person from whom Zaid bin Thābit received the passage. So, ALM (الم) is meant for al-Mughira (المغيرة). Otto Loth disagrees to the 'Monogram Theory' of Noldeke and opines that it goes back to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and is the result of Jewish influence. That's why, they appear at the heads of Medinan suras only. Aloyes

Sprenger retains Noldeke's theory but he takes it back to the Prophet (PBUH) and considers it a Judeo-Christian influence. For example, KHY'S (كهيعص) stands for "عيسى" "ناصرى ملك اليهوديين" in which K is for 'malik', HY is for 'Yahudiyyin' (' is for 'Isā and S is for 'Nāsiri'. Hartwig Hirschfeld is the next man who supports 'Monogram theory' of Noldeke as it is giving the reason that if it goes back to Muhammad (PBUH), the result would be that he has some share in the compilation of surās which is not proven. Hans Bauer thinks that they are actually the titles of the surās and refer to the most 'catch words' of the suras such as YS (يس) refers to the word يسعى of the verse 20 the Surā. Lastly, Eduard Goossens agrees to the theory of Monogram or abbreviation put by the collector or latter redactor. He claims that he has a consistent principle of interpreting all the mystic letters. These letters are a sort of introductions of the suras like other titles. For example, N (ن) is for (حوت) word in the verse 48 of the sura. In the same way, he has applied the same methodology on other letters.

Jeffery has committed a number of mistakes while presenting the material regarding verse numbering, word pronunciations, transliteration etc. For example, he writes "صاحب الحوت" as "صاحب النون" wrongly. But, he does not agree with western scholars in every interpretation rather he disagrees too and shows his disagreement such as, he refutes Aloys Sprenger's far-fetched interpretation as "All of which is very far-fetched and improbable" (Jeffery, 1942, p.249).

### Progress in the Study of the Korān Text

In the article "Progress in the Study of the Koran Text" (Jeffery, 1935), Jeffery gives Islāmic Tradition of establishing the text of the Qur'ān from Prophetic Era to the Cairo Edition of the Qur'ān and from Textual canonization by 'Uthman (RA) to the canonization of seven Reading systems by Ibn Mujāhid. Then he

shares western tradition and his collaboration with the German scholars Bergstrasser and Otto Pretzl for creating the critical edition of the Qur'ān (Jeffery, 1935).

Jeffery puts thesis of progress in the study of the text of the Qur'ān in an effective way. He seems to be having strong grip of Arabic language and the works on the Qur'ān as well. He aligns to some points of Muslim tradition of establishing Qur'ānic text whereas, challenges some of them. He gives special importance to the codices other than 'Uthmanic Recension. He highlights the opposition appeared against it and then the opposition appeared against the canonization of Ibn Mujahid of Seven Reading systems. He did actually a labourious work on the subject.

### Abu 'Ubaid on the Verses Missing from the Koran

Abu 'Ubaid on the Verses Missing from the Koran (Jeffery, 1938) was originally published in the journal, The Muslim World and reprinted in the Origins of the Koran: Classic Essays on Islām's Holy Book (Ibn-e-Warraaq in 1998). The very short essay deals with the chapter of the book, "Kitāb Fadāil al-Qurān" by Ubu 'Ubaid Qāsim bin Sallām, containing the traditions regarding the verses fallen out of the Qur'ān. Jeffery shares his own opinion regarding the compilation of the Qur'ān in the context of the 'Uthmanic Recension in the introductory lines. It can be split into three points:

- I. An honest effort was made to assemble the extant text available in Madina. There is no question on it.
- II. Possibly not very probably, some passages which were not original revelations of the Prophet (PBUH), might enter the codex.
- III. It is sure that many passages, the original revelations of the Prophet (PBUH) have fallen out of the standard text (Jeffery, 1938, p.61).

Then the traditions in the chapter of Abu 'Ubain's book are presented as an evidence.

The traditions have been transmitted from 'Aysha (RA), 'Umer bin Khattāb, Ubai bin Ka'b, 'Abdul Rahmān bin 'Auf, 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and 'Abdullah bin 'Umer (RA). Four particular verses, the verse of stoning, a verse on fathers' status, a verse on man's greedy nature and a verse on man's strife have been reported as fallen and missed from the Official Codex. There have been given Abu 'Ubaid's own remarks at the end that these verses are extras and have not been handed down as Qur'ān to us. The savants have said that it is the similar content to what is between two covers of the Qur'ān. That's why the authorities have not considered nonbeliever the one who rejects them as Qur'ān, otherwise, the one who rejects a single verse between the covers is unanimously declared Kāfir.

Jeffery, though, seems to be very careful in setting his opinions on the compilation of the text of the Qur'ān by using terms such as "an honest effort", possible but not very probable" and "is certain", yet he has successfully conveyed the view of orientalist and of his own that cannot be acceptable for the Muslims who believe that the Qur'ān is complete nothing added and nothing missed out.

#### **A Variant Text of the Fātiha**

Jeffery in the article "A Variant Text of the Fātiha" (Jeffery, 1939) has reproduced two variant texts of sura Fātiha and he has commented on each variant drawing a comparison with TR (Textus Receptus). Out of the two texts mentioned in the article, one has been introduced as which was written by Muhammad Bāqir Majlisi, a Shi'a authority, in his book Tadhkirat al-A'imma and has been current among Shi'a Muslims. The second one was in the possession of an Egyptian scholar known to Jeffery, it was in a summary of some unimportant collection of Shafi Fiqh, contained a variant text of Fātiha with the heading al-qiraat al-Shāddha li'l Fātiha

transmitted by Khalil bin Ahmad (Jeffery, 1939, pp.158-59).

In both the texts almost every verse has variant against it. Jeffery seems to be realistic in commenting on these variants accepting their shudhudh (irregularity), "it will have been noticed that the sense of the Fātiha is precisely the same whether we read the TR or either of these variants. There is no ascertainable reason for the variant readings" (Jeffery, 1939, p.61).<sup>i</sup> But he seems to be disappointed at being found nothing against the text of the Qur'ān except the theory that Fātiha was not the part of the Qur'ānic text originally but added later on just for reading before the recitation of the Qur'ān following other religious traditions.

#### **Overall Analysis**

The over-all approach of Jeffrey in all the afore-introduced works is Textual Criticism for which he has adopted various techniques. The techniques utilized by him may be categorized as follows,

- **Comparative linguistics;** through it he compares the language of the Qur'ān with other Semitic Languages existed at the time of revelation of the Qur'ān and then with the help of other techniques he infers certain outcomes, i.e., the influence of neighbouring cultures and languages on the language as well as the teachings of the Qur'ān.
- **Comparative Religion;** through it Jeffery compares the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the Qur'ān as well their teachings with the founders of different religious traditions and their scriptures respectively and draws the conclusion that the Prophet and the Qur'ān both are under strong influence of the previous and contemporary religions particularly Judeo-Christianity.
- **Historical Critical Method;** through it he tries to analyze text of the Qur'ān through historical evidences existing in

archaeology, works of history composed by the writers other than Islamic Tradition on Middle Eastern history and the historical evolution of Arabic linguistics as well as Historiography of the Qur'ānic Text.

- **Textual Critical Method;** in it Jeffery tries to trace the evidences from the text itself to determine its status as text in a certain context. For both the methods he utilizes Biblical Hermeneutics.
- **Revisionism;** to Jeffery, a lot has been added to the Qur'ān and to the person of the Prophet(PBUH) by the Muslim Orthodoxy under the Tendency of Idealization as usually happens in every religion. Theological and Juristic differences have also played a role in developing certain ideologies. It seems to be necessary to trace the textual status of the Qur'ān returning from the current ideas among the Muslims to a fresh start under secular approaches of modern criticism.

### Conclusion

The analytical survey of Jeffery's studies gives the impression that he has tried to prove the Judeo-Christian influence on the Qur'ānic text as well as the influence of some non-Semitic religious traditions both past and contemporary. This influence is not only on the teachings and ideas of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) but also on textual vocabulary of the Qur'ān. He has narrated his own textual history of the Qur'ān which is not aligned to the one narrated by Islamic tradition. According to his studies the present text of Qur'ān is incomplete and only represents the Medinan text. Much was missed and could not be included in 'Uthmānic Recension. Most of The text missed by 'Uthmān has been lost except the variants survived by the works of theological, interpretative and philological importance for the Muslims. This is unfortunate that the

Muslim tradition of criticism focused transmission process and ignored textual validity of the traditions dealing with Qur'ānic text. Jeffery considers that the theory of I'jāz-al-Qu'rān stopped the door of textual criticism as according to this theory, the Qur'ān is the literal word of God which is unmatched and extra-criticism. So, there is a need of critical edition of the Qur'ān that may fill the gaps left by the Muslims and may present the text of the Qur'ān in complete form as maximum as possible. His studies also leave the impression that he is not biased too much rather he reaches certain conclusions on the basis of hermeneutists of modern criticism and western methodology. He considers the Prophet (PBUH) sincere in his efforts to present a better religion to his society.

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